Lent 2015:
From Wilderness to Wholeness

LENTEN DISCIPLINES AND PRACTICES
LITURGICAL AND HOMILETICAL CONCERNS
MY PEOPLE

- Seminary faculty and their families
- Seminary Students
- Chinese families with parents who have PhD/MD in medical research and other highly technical training
- Blue-collar workers
- Elementary age students (Anglo/Chinese)
- Youth, 6-12th grade (Anglo/Chinese)
- White-collar workers (Anglo)
Lent, holiness, pray, need, live, blessed, God, holy, also, whole, church, important, need, holiness, pray, consider, reminders, sinful, dust, lives, bring, order, sense, might, greater, wonder, dust, way, may, ways, feared, sinfulness, sinfulness, keep, Law, Dust, actions, embrace, reminding, merely, prayer, sense, might, greater, wonder, dust, lives, bring, order, sense, might, greater, wonder, dust, way, may, ways, feared, sinfulness, sinfulness, keep, Law, Dust, actions, embrace, reminding, merely, prayer.
THE RESULT OF LISTENING

- “I have cancer, and this may be my last year with my family.”
- “My son hates me and won’t return my calls.”
- “I have a large collection of pornography, and I don’t really want to get rid of it.”
- “I drink a lot, and don’t know how to stop.”
- “I can’t give any time to church, because my job is too important.”
- “My money is MY money.”
- “My spouse hasn’t touched me in years. I just want sex so much.”
- “I need help with my bills, because I have gone in debt over internet porn.”
THE RESULT OF LISTENING

• “This is America, and everybody that comes to this church needs to speak English.”

• “Only the Chinese are interested in discipleship. The anglos don’t seem to care about discipleship or fellowship.”

• “My husband, the atheist, wants you to pray with him. He doesn’t have much time left.”

• “My husband has a gay brother and I don’t want my children around that pervert.”
THE LENTEN JOURNEY: FROM WILDERNESS TO WHOLENESS

- Ash Wednesday, 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10: Brokenness is our reality; reconciliation accomplished by Christ; our life’s work is reconciliation

- February 22, Mark 1:9-15: We all begin in the wilderness; Jesus did; He lived in the wilderness in wholeness; He makes it possible for us to face our wilderness in wholeness
THE LENTEN JOURNEY: FROM WILDERNESS TO WHOLENESS

• March 1, Mark 8:31-38: What kind of Jesus do you want in your life? The kind of disciple Jesus is looking for finds comfort in losing their life for the sake of the gospel. Chasing after God is a long journey of obedience. We cannot be encumbered with baggage for the journey.
THE LENTEN JOURNEY: FROM WILDERNESS TO WHOLENESS

• March 8, John 2:13-22: We rush out of the wilderness in order to put down roots and build us a home. Roots are fine, but wilderness is not simply a location. It is a reality. Wholeness comes in the wilderness, when we seek the Savior as our dwelling place.
THE LENTEN JOURNEY: FROM WILDERNESS TO WHOLENESS

- March 15, John 3:14-21: Wilderness wandering is a lonely existence. Even when we are on the journey with others in the wilderness, loneliness is a pervasive reality. We don’t know where we are going and we don’t know how long we will be there. Does God know what God is doing? For God so loved....
THE LENTEN JOURNEY: FROM WILDERNESS TO WHOLENESS

- March 22, John 12:20-33: We want to see Jesus. The wilderness has become overwhelming. The circumstances of our lives have become too much to handle. We want to see Jesus. When we see him, what will we do? What will we say? Wholeness will not be found in our demand of things from Jesus, but in our willingness to go with him….even to death.
March 29, Mark 14:1-15:47: When you are in the wilderness, you don’t want to waste your resources. So, this woman’s extravagance is deeply troubling to those around her. They see it as stupid, careless, and wasteful. But with eyes to see we might realize that desperate people do desperate things in the wilderness. We might be willing to risk everything. The gospel is a risk to all who receive it. How extravagant are you?
“Our new Moses: you led us through the sea and trampled down our ancient foes. In baptism you pierced our hardness of heart and engraved your law within us. Blessed are you! Holy! Worthy! Matchless! In the coming days of Lent, prepare us to be plunged anew into your Paschal Mystery, renewing the baptismal covenant that marks us as your own. Save us and all your daughters and sons from going back to lust for our old way of life. Heal all who cry out to you in suffering. Hear and deliver the oppressed in their anguish and misery. Surround seekers and catechumens with soul-friends. Befriend penitents with hope and merciful encouragers. Receive those we let down through the roof for your touch now and always. Amen.

—Daniel T. Benedict and Dwight M. Vogel